



# THE CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS  
CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE  
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN PUBIC HEARING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014

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Associations*

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Karissa Niehoff. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). I am here to testify on **HB 5113: An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions**, and to reference SB 229 as well. While CAS-CIAC supports the intent of Raised Bill 5113, **we cannot support the bill as written.**

CAS is a nonprofit organization which provides professional development for school leaders- primarily principals- in over 1000 member schools. CAS includes the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) which is the regulatory body for interscholastic athletics and student activities.

Our office building houses the Connecticut Coaching Education Program, the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors, the Connecticut Officials' Association and the SOCT-CIAC Unified Sports Program.

The health and safety of students has always been a top priority of our association. The regulations we establish relevant to health and safety, to which we hold member schools accountable, have been developed in conjunction with sports medicine professionals at the national and state levels, and based on research into best practices.

In 2009 our association worked closely with Senator Looney to lead the nation in drafting the current concussion legislation. Connecticut and the CIAC have remained leaders in terms of requirements of coaches in the area of concussion training. Most recently, CIAC drafted and approved association regulations about educating parents and student-athletes and limiting contact time in football.

Recently, a concussion interest group said that they had been in a "year long struggle" with us to "provide basic safety measures to our children" and nothing could be further from the truth. I am stunned that anyone would suggest that we have been nothing other than collaborative and I find these remarks inaccurate, unfair and professionally unkind.

Working with Senator Looney in 2009, we were leaders in the efforts to protect student athletes. This was long before the formation of the concussion interest group. However, we have not rested on this issue.

We have had numerous meetings with stakeholders, legislators, and colleagues; participated in countless phone calls and provided relevant resources and documents around the concussion issue. That says nothing for the extensive programs we support and implement for our schools, school leaders, athletic directors, coaches, and over 110,000 student-athletes.



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It has been suggested that our state's concussion law is grossly inadequate compared to legislation in other states. Today I am providing data from a recent survey of state executive directors. They were given 48 hours; 34 of 51 associations responded. Five questions were asked; the responses are broken down on the Excel spreadsheet which we have provided.

Of the 34 states who responded:

- 23 states have enacted legislation requiring the training of coaches in concussions.
- 19 states have enacted legislation requiring the training of parents and student athletes.
- 17 states have legislation that directs the state association alone or in combination with others to provide concussion awareness training.
- Only 4 states have legislation requiring the training of officials.
- NO states have enacted legislation that addresses contact time in practice or any other specifics for football or another sport.

We have been and remain the leader nationwide among states and associations.

- Our educational materials and training programs were developed in collaboration with sports medicine professionals.
- We already educate coaches, parents and student-athletes.
- We have offered to make available online and at no cost to schools and municipalities concussion training materials that are age and context appropriate, including informed consent forms.

We want Connecticut to continue to be a national leader, but we believe that leadership is not about what is written on a page, it is about action. The action that is necessary to remain on the forefront of injury education, prevention and management will require flexibility and responsiveness. If legislation is enacted that is unnecessarily prescriptive or burdensome, then our association's ability to be nimble- to modify regulations and implement new practices will be greatly compromised if not crippled. For example, the bill proposes 90 minutes of contact time for drills throughout the season. 120 minutes pre-season is recommended to teach proper techniques while only 60 minutes post season is recommended as athletes are in tournament situations which do not involve as much skill instruction.

Over-prescriptive legislation leads to bills such as SB 229 which is unnecessary, as cardiac crisis awareness is already being taught to coaches through First Aid and CPR.

In closing, the CIAC has a well-established history of being out in front on issues of safety for student-athletes and children. We were behind the concussion legislation in 2009 and the pool safety legislation in 2013. We stand ready to work with you to get this right. There are too many flaws in this bill as written that we cannot support it at this time.

	1. Has your state enacted legislation that requires the training of parents and student/athletes with regards to concussions/head injuries.	2. Has your state enacted legislation requiring the training of officials.	3. Has your state enacted legislation that addresses contact time in practice, number of Qtrs played, or any other specifics for football or another sport	4. Has your state enacted legislation requiring the training of coaches in concussions and if yes # of hrs.	5. Has your state enacted legislation that directs your association alone, or in collaboration with other associations to provide concussion awareness training?
Hawaii	Y	N	N	Y-NOT Specific	Y
Maine	Legislature let association take lead				N
Wisconsin	Y	N	N	Y	Y
R.I.	Y	N	N	Y	Collaboration
N.Y.	Y	Y	N	Y-Prop	Y-Prop
D.C.	Y-Proposed	N	N	Y	N
W.VA	N	N	N	Y	N
PA	N	N	N	Y	Y
KY	Y	Y-Limited	N	Y	Y
IX	Y	N	N	Y	N
Montana	Y	N	N	Y not spec	N
WY	Y	N	N	N	N
Iowa	N	Y	N	N	Y
GA	Y-Read and sign	N	N	N	N
HLA	N	N	N	Y	Y
MISSOURI	Y	N	N	Y	Y
N.Mex***	Y	Y	N	N	Y
KA	N	N	N	N	Y
ALABAMA	N	N	N	N	N
MISS	N	N	N	Y	Y
ARIZONA	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
ALASKA	Y-Directs assoc	N	N	Y	Y
CAL	N	N	N	Y	N
Oregon	N	N	N	Y	Refers to assoc
LA	N	N	N	N	Y
IA	N	N	N	Y	N
Ienn	Y	N	N	Y	Y-W Dept health
ARK	Y	N	N	Y	N
SD	N	N/A	N	Y	N
NH	N	N	N	N	N
DEL	Y	N	N	Y	N
MICH	Y	N	N	N	N
N.C.	Y	N	N	N	N
	19-y 14 n	4-y 28-n 1 N/A	34-n	23-y 10 n	1/-y 16-n

